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7055	7590	03/09/2006	EXAMINER	
GREENBLUM & BERNSTEIN, P.L.C. 1950 ROLAND CLARKE PLACE RESTON, VA 20191			MILLER, JONATHAN R	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3653	
DATE MAILED: 03/09/2006				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/630,940

Applicant(s)

HANSON ET AL.

Examiner

Jonathan R. Miller

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 7/31/03 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>20030731</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1 – 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over De Leo et al. The reference discloses a plurality of input feeding devices (F_1 , F_2) each randomly receiving product from a stream of product; a plurality of output groups (W_a , W_b) each having a plurality of output bins; and a control system having a mode (Fig. 1a) which constrains the input feeding devices to (i) feeding non-rejected product to output bins of assigned output groups of the plurality of output groups associated with a corresponding one of the plurality of input feeding devices, and (ii) feeding rejected product to at least one output bin of the plurality of output bins in a single group accessible to any of the plurality of input feeders (col. 3, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 10+). De Leo fails to explicitly disclose a rejection bin. Examiner takes Official Notice with regards to the feeding rejected products to a rejection bin. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to utilize one or more of the sorting bins as

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rejection bins. Sorting of mail, wherein the mail is first read or scanned and is then sent to an appropriate sorting bin, requires a rejection bin to properly operate. This is very well known in the postal sorting art. Mail that cannot be scanned or is scannable, but has an improper address, must be rejected from the automated process to a rejection bin, and sorted by another means.

4. With regards to claim 2, De Leo fails to explicitly disclose each of the plurality of input feeding devices directs the rejected product from the stream of product to the at least one output bin in the single group based on at least one of misreading or non-reading of a code associated with the rejected product and an operator or machine error (col. 3, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 10+). Examiner takes Official Notice with regards to the feeding rejected products to a rejection bin based on at least one of misreading or non-reading of a code associated with the rejected product and an operator or machine error. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to utilize one or more of the sorting bins as rejection bins. Sorting of mail, wherein the mail is first read or scanned and is then sent to an appropriate sorting bin, requires a rejection bin to properly operate. This is very well known in the postal sorting art. Mail that cannot be scanned or is scannable, but has an improper address, must be rejected from the automated process to a rejection bin, and sorted by another means.

5. With regards to claim 3, the reference further discloses a number of the plurality of input feeding devices equals a number of the plurality of output groups (col. 3, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 10+).

6. With regards to claim 4, the reference further discloses the at least one output bin is a single reject output bin (col. 3, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 10+). De Leo fails to explicitly disclose a single rejection bin. Examiner takes Official Notice with regards to the feeding rejected products

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to a rejection bin. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to utilize one or more of the sorting bins as rejection bins. Sorting of mail, wherein the mail is first read or scanned and is then sent to an appropriate sorting bin, requires a rejection bin to properly operate. This is very well known in the postal sorting art. Mail that cannot be scanned or is scannable, but has an improper address, must be rejected from the automated process to a rejection bin, and sorted by another means.

7. With regards to claim 5, the reference further inherently discloses the single reject output bin increases a capacity of processing points for sequencing the product during a second pass phase in the plurality of output groups. (col. 3, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 10+). A reject bin inherently increases the capacity of the apparatus, as undeliverable mail is removed from the system, thus freeing up capacity.

8. With regards to claim 6, De Leo fails to explicitly disclose the single reject output bin is provided in a separate output group from the plurality of output groups (col. 3, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 10+). Examiner takes Official Notice with regards to the feeding rejected products to a rejection bin provided in a separate output group from the plurality of output groups. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to utilize one or more of the sorting bins as rejection bins provided in a separate output group from the plurality of output groups. Sorting of mail, wherein the mail is first read or scanned and is then sent to an appropriate sorting bin, requires a rejection bin to properly operate. Furthermore, as the rejected material must be handled separately from the sortable material, a rejection bin provided in a separate output group provides the advantage of physical separation for the rejected material. This is very well known in the postal sorting art. Mail that cannot be scanned or is scannable,

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but has an improper address, must be rejected from the automated process to a rejection bin, and sorted by another means.

9.

10. With regards to claim 7, the reference further discloses the control system assigns each input feeding 4 device to a respective one of the assigned output groups of the plurality of output group for feeding the non-rejected product during a second pass phase (Fig. 1b; col. 3, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 10+).

11. With regards to claim 8, the reference further discloses the control system constrains each input feeding device to the at least one output bin for feeding the rejected product during the second pass phase (col. 3, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 10+).

12. With regards to claim 9, the reference further discloses the control system assigns each of the assigned output groups to a designated number of routes (col. 3, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 10+).

13. With regards to claim 10, the reference further discloses the plurality of input feeding devices is at least two input feeding devices (col. 3, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 10+).

14. With regards to claim 11, the reference further discloses the plurality of input feeding devices is four input feeding devices and the plurality of output groups is equal to a number of the plurality of input feeding devices (col. 3, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 10+).

15. With regards to claim 12, the reference further discloses the control system provides the plurality of input feeding devices access to all of the plurality of output groups during a first pass phase of sorting the products (col. 3, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 10+).

16. With regards to claim 13, the reference further discloses the plurality of input feeding devices is equal to a number of the plurality of output groups (col. 3, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 10+).

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17. With regards to claim 14, the reference further discloses the product is mail pieces (col. 3, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 10+).

18. With regards to claim 15, the reference further discloses providing a plurality of product from a stream of product to any of a plurality of input devices. feeding, in a first pass phase, each product of the plurality of product to output bins based on a code associated with each product of the plurality of product; assigning each input device of the plurality of input devices to a specific output group of the plurality of output groups for a second pass phase; feeding, in the second pass phase, non-rejected product of the plurality of product to the output bins of the specific output group assigned to the each input device which is feeding the non-rejected product; and feeding, (col. 3, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 10+). De Leo fails to explicitly disclose in the second pass phase, rejected product of the plurality of product to an output bin common and accessible to any of the input devices. Examiner takes Official Notice with regards to the feeding rejected products to a rejection bin. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to utilize one or more of the sorting bins as rejection bins. Sorting of mail, wherein the mail is first read or scanned and is then sent to an appropriate sorting bin, requires a rejection bin to properly operate. Furthermore, this rejection bin must be accessible to all of the input devices, in order to perform the role of a rejection bin. A rejectable piece of material may come from any of the input devices, so each input device must be able to access the rejection bin. This is very well known in the postal sorting art. Mail that cannot be scanned or is scannable, but has an improper address, must be rejected from the automated process to a rejection bin, and sorted by another means.

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19. With regards to claim 16, the reference fails to disclose the rejected product is based on one of a misreading or non-reading of a code associated with the rejected product and an operator error (col. 3, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 10+). Examiner takes official notice with regards to the rejected product is based on one of a misreading or non-reading of a code associated with the rejected product and an operator error. Sorting of mail, wherein the mail is first read or scanned and is then sent to an appropriate sorting bin, implicitly and inherently requires a rejection bin. This is very well known in the postal sorting art. Mail that cannot be scanned or is scannable, but has an improper address, must be rejected from the automated process to a rejection bin, and sorted by another means.

20. With regards to claim 17, the reference further discloses the rejected products are fed by each input device of the plurality of input devices to the commonly accessible output bin (col. 3, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 10+). Examiner takes Official Notice with regards to the feeding rejected products to a rejection bin. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to utilize one or more of the sorting bins as rejection bins. Sorting of mail, wherein the mail is first read or scanned and is then sent to an appropriate sorting bin, requires a rejection bin to properly operate. Furthermore, this rejection bin must be accessible to all of the input devices, in order to perform the role of a rejection bin. A rejectable piece of material may come from any of the input devices, so each input device must be able to access the rejection bin. This is very well known in the postal sorting art. Mail that cannot be scanned or is scannable, but has an improper address, must be rejected from the automated process to a rejection bin, and sorted by another means.

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21. With regards to claim 18, the reference further discloses the step of determining whether the product is going through a first pass phase or a second pass phase and adjusting a control system between a first mode of operation and a second mode of operation, respectively (col. 3, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 10+).

22. With regards to claim 19, the reference further discloses the commonly accessible output bin is one of the output bins of the specific output group and the any of the input devices are all of the input devices (col. 3, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 10+).

23. With regards to claim 20, the reference further discloses the product is mail pieces (col. 3, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 10+).

24. With regards to claim 21, the reference further discloses means for providing a plurality of product from a stream of product; means for feeding each product of the plurality of product to output bins based on a code in a first pass phase and second pass phase; means for assigning each feeding means to a specific output group of the plurality of output groups for the second pass phase; means for constraining, in the second pass phase, non-rejected product of the plurality of product to the output bins of the specific output group assigned to the each feeding means which is feeding the non-rejected product; and means for permitting, in the second pass phase, rejected product of the plurality of product to an output bin common and accessible to any of the feeding means (col. 3, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 10+). Examiner takes official notice with regards to the feeding rejected products to a rejection bin. Sorting of mail, wherein the mail is first read or scanned and is then sent to an appropriate sorting bin, implicitly and inherently requires a rejection bin. This is very well known in the postal sorting art. Mail that cannot be

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scanned or is scannable, but has an improper address, must be rejected from the automated process to a rejection bin, and sorted by another means.

25. With regards to claim 22, the reference further discloses at least the means for constraining and the means for permitting is a control system operable in a first mode of operation and a second mode of operation (col. 3, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 10+).

26. With regards to claim 23, the reference further discloses the product is mail pieces (col. 3, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 10+).

27. Claims 1 – 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Walach.

The reference discloses a plurality of input feeding devices (P) each randomly receiving product from a stream of product; a plurality of output groups (N) each having a plurality of output bins; and a control system having a mode (120) which constrains the input feeding devices to (i) feeding non-rejected product to output bins of assigned output groups of the plurality of output groups associated with a corresponding one of the plurality of input feeding devices (col. 3, lines 46+; col. 4, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 38+). Walach fails to explicitly disclose a rejection bin.

Examiner takes Official Notice with regards to the feeding rejected products to a rejection bin.

At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to utilize one or more of the sorting bins as rejection bins. Sorting of mail, wherein the mail is first read or scanned and is then sent to an appropriate sorting bin, requires a rejection bin to properly operate. This is very well known in the postal sorting art. Mail that cannot be scanned or is scannable, but has an improper address, must be rejected from the automated process to a rejection bin, and sorted by another means.

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28. With regards to claim 2, Walach fails to explicitly disclose each of the plurality of input feeding devices directs the rejected product from the stream of product to the at least one output bin in the single group based on at least one of misreading or non-reading of a code associated with the rejected product and an operator or machine error (col. 3, lines 46+; col. 4, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 38+). Examiner takes Official Notice with regards to the feeding rejected products to a rejection bin based on at least one of misreading or non-reading of a code associated with the rejected product and an operator or machine error. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to utilize one or more of the sorting bins as rejection bins. Sorting of mail, wherein the mail is first read or scanned and is then sent to an appropriate sorting bin, requires a rejection bin to properly operate. This is very well known in the postal sorting art. Mail that cannot be scanned or is scannable, but has an improper address, must be rejected from the automated process to a rejection bin, and sorted by another means.

29. With regards to claim 3, the reference further discloses a number of the plurality of input feeding devices equals a number of the plurality of output groups (col. 3, lines 46+; col. 4, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 38+).

30. With regards to claim 4, Walach fails to explicitly disclose a single rejection bin. Examiner takes Official Notice with regards to the feeding rejected products to a rejection bin. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to utilize one or more of the sorting bins as rejection bins (col. 3, lines 46+; col. 4, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 38+). Sorting of mail, wherein the mail is first read or scanned and is then sent to an appropriate sorting bin, requires a rejection bin to properly operate. This is very well known in

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the postal sorting art. Mail that cannot be scanned or is scannable, but has an improper address, must be rejected from the automated process to a rejection bin, and sorted by another means.

31. With regards to claim 5, the reference further inherently discloses the single reject output bin increases a capacity of processing points for sequencing the product during a second pass phase in the plurality of output groups. (col. 3, lines 46+; col. 4, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 38+). A reject bin inherently increases the capacity of the apparatus, as undeliverable mail is removed from the system, thus freeing up capacity.

32. With regards to claim 6, Walach fails to explicitly disclose the single reject output bin is provided in a separate output group from the plurality of output groups (col. 3, lines 46+; col. 4, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 38+). Examiner takes Official Notice with regards to the feeding rejected products to a rejection bin provided in a separate output group from the plurality of output groups. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to utilize one or more of the sorting bins as rejection bins provided in a separate output group from the plurality of output groups. Sorting of mail, wherein the mail is first read or scanned and is then sent to an appropriate sorting bin, requires a rejection bin to properly operate. Furthermore, as the rejected material must be handled separately from the sortable material, a rejection bin provided in a separate output group provides the advantage of physical separation for the rejected material. This is very well known in the postal sorting art. Mail that cannot be scanned or is scannable, but has an improper address, must be rejected from the automated process to a rejection bin, and sorted by another means.

33. With regards to claim 7, the reference further discloses the control system assigns each input feeding device to a respective one of the assigned output groups of the plurality of output

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group for feeding the non-rejected product during a second pass phase (col. 3, lines 46+; col. 4, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 38+).

34. With regards to claim 8, the reference further discloses the control system constrains each input feeding device to the at least one output bin for feeding the rejected product during the second pass phase (col. 3, lines 46+; col. 4, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 38+).

35. With regards to claim 9, the reference further discloses the control system assigns each of the assigned output groups to a designated number of routes (col. 3, lines 46+; col. 4, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 38+).

36. With regards to claim 10, the reference further discloses the plurality of input feeding devices is at least two input feeding devices (col. 3, lines 46+; col. 4, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 38+).

37. With regards to claim 11, the reference further discloses the plurality of input feeding devices is four input feeding devices and the plurality of output groups is equal to a number of the plurality of input feeding devices (col. 3, lines 46+; col. 4, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 38+).

38. With regards to claim 12, the reference further discloses the control system provides the plurality of input feeding devices access to all of the plurality of output groups during a first pass phase of sorting the products (col. 3, lines 46+; col. 4, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 38+).

39. With regards to claim 13, the reference further discloses the plurality of input feeding devices is equal to a number of the plurality of output groups (col. 3, lines 46+; col. 4, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 38+).

40. With regards to claim 14, the reference further discloses the product is mail pieces (col. 3, lines 46+; col. 4, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 38+).

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41. With regards to claim 15, the reference further discloses providing a plurality of product from a stream of product to any of a plurality of input devices, feeding, in a first pass phase (120), each product of the plurality of product to output bins based on a code associated with each product of the plurality of product; assigning each input device of the plurality of input devices to a specific output group of the plurality of output groups for a second pass phase (130); feeding, in the second pass phase, non-rejected product of the plurality of product to the output bins of the specific output group assigned to the each input device which is feeding the non-rejected product; and feeding, (col. 3, lines 46+; col. 4, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 38+). Walach fails to explicitly disclose in the second pass phase, rejected product of the plurality of product to an output bin common and accessible to any of the input devices. Examiner takes Official Notice with regards to the feeding rejected products to a rejection bin. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to utilize one or more of the sorting bins as rejection bins. Sorting of mail, wherein the mail is first read or scanned and is then sent to an appropriate sorting bin, requires a rejection bin to properly operate. Furthermore, this rejection bin must be accessible to all of the input devices, in order to perform the role of a rejection bin. A rejectable piece of material may come from any of the input devices, so each input device must be able to access the rejection bin. This is very well known in the postal sorting art. Mail that cannot be scanned or is scannable, but has an improper address, must be rejected from the automated process to a rejection bin, and sorted by another means.

42. With regards to claim 16, the reference fails to disclose the rejected product is based on one of a misreading or non-reading of a code associated with the rejected product and an operator error (col. 3, lines 46+; col. 4, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 38+). Examiner takes Official

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Notice with regards to the rejected product is based on one of a misreading or non-reading of a code associated with the rejected product and an operator error. Sorting of mail, wherein the mail is first read or scanned and is then sent to an appropriate sorting bin, implicitly and inherently requires a rejection bin. This is very well known in the postal sorting art. Mail that cannot be scanned or is scannable, but has an improper address, must be rejected from the automated process to a rejection bin, and sorted by another means.

43. With regards to claim 17, the reference further discloses the rejected products are fed by each input device of the plurality of input devices to the commonly accessible output bin (col. 3, lines 46+; col. 4, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 38+). Examiner takes Official Notice with regards to the feeding rejected products to a rejection bin. At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to utilize one or more of the sorting bins as rejection bins. Sorting of mail, wherein the mail is first read or scanned and is then sent to an appropriate sorting bin, requires a rejection bin to properly operate. Furthermore, this rejection bin must be accessible to all of the input devices, in order to perform the role of a rejection bin. A rejectable piece of material may come from any of the input devices, so each input device must be able to access the rejection bin. This is very well known in the postal sorting art. Mail that cannot be scanned or is scannable, but has an improper address, must be rejected from the automated process to a rejection bin, and sorted by another means.

44. With regards to claim 18, the reference further discloses the step of determining whether the product is going through a first pass phase (120) or a second pass phase (130) and adjusting a control system between a first mode of operation and a second mode of operation, respectively (col. 3, lines 46+; col. 4, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 38+).

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45. With regards to claim 19, the reference further discloses the commonly accessible output bin is one of the output bins of the specific output group and the any of the input devices are all of the input devices (col. 3, lines 46+; col. 4, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 38+).

46. With regards to claim 20, the reference further discloses the product is mail pieces (col. 3, lines 46+; col. 4, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 38+).

47. With regards to claim 21, the reference further discloses means for providing a plurality of product from a stream of product; means for feeding each product of the plurality of product to output bins based on a code in a first pass phase (120) and second pass phase; means for assigning each feeding means to a specific output group of the plurality of output groups for the second pass phase; means for constraining, in the second pass phase (130), non-rejected product of the plurality of product to the output bins of the specific output group assigned to the each feeding means which is feeding the non-rejected product; and means for permitting, in the second pass phase (130), rejected product of the plurality of product to an output bin common and accessible to any of the feeding means (col. 3, lines 46+; col. 4, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 38+).

Examiner takes Official Notice with regards to the feeding rejected products to a rejection bin.

Sorting of mail, wherein the mail is first read or scanned and is then sent to an appropriate sorting bin, implicitly and inherently requires a rejection bin. This is very well known in the postal sorting art. Mail that cannot be scanned or is scannable, but has an improper address, must be rejected from the automated process to a rejection bin, and sorted by another means.

48. With regards to claim 22, the reference further discloses at least the means for constraining and the means for permitting is a control system operable in a first mode of operation and a second mode of operation (col. 3, lines 46+; col. 4, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 38+).

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49. With regards to claim 23, the reference further discloses the product is mail pieces (col. 3, lines 46+; col. 4, lines 10+; col. 5, lines 38+).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

50. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

51. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 6 seems to be irreconcilable with claims 1 and 4 from which claim 6 depends. Claim 1 recites: “feeding rejected product to at least one output bin of the plurality of output bins in a single group accessible to any of the plurality of input feeders” and claim 6 states: “the single reject output bin is provided in a separate output group from the plurality of output groups”. Claim 1 seems to require the reject bin be part of a group, and claim 6 requires the opposite. Thus claim 6 is indefinite.

Claim Objections

52. Claim 10 is objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c), as being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim. Applicant is required to cancel the claim(s), or amend the claim(s) to place the claim(s) in proper dependent form, or rewrite the claim(s) in independent form. Claim 10 attempts to further limit claim 1 by saying the plurality is at least two. This, however, does not further limit the independent claim as a plurality is defined as at least two.

Information Disclosure Statement

53. The information disclosure statement filed 7/31/03 fails to comply with 37 CFR 1.98(a)(3) because it does not include a concise explanation of the relevance, as it is presently understood by the individual designated in 37 CFR 1.56(c) most knowledgeable about the content of the information, of each patent listed that is not in the English language. It has been placed in the application file, but the information referred to therein has not been considered.

Conclusion

54. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jonathan R. Miller whose telephone number is (571) 272-6940. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F: 8:30AM-5:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kathy A. Matecki can be reached on (571) 272-6951. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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